

# **MemRemix**

CS 194H Winter 2024

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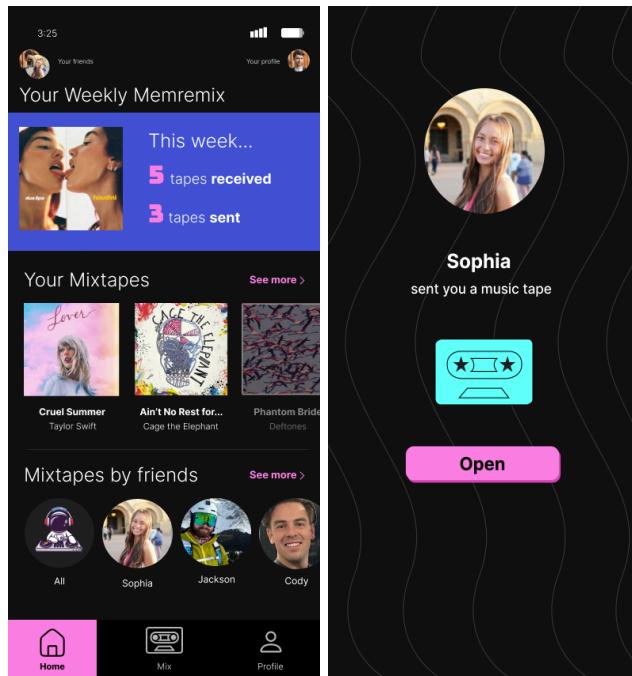
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## **Problem Description**

A decade ago, creating mixtapes was a widespread trend, individuals would dedicate hours to meticulously curating the ultimate playlist of songs as a personalized gift for their friends. With the advent of streaming platforms, the tradition of gifting music to others has largely faded into obscurity. Although streaming platforms provide features to share songs and playlists, they lack the personal touch that made mixtapes so special. MemRemix aims to revive the beloved personalized mixtape culture and reintroduce it to the mainstream.

## Solution Overview

Music has been and always will be inherently social. But, we've lost the days of handcrafted mixtapes — music embedded with meaning and memories. MemRemix is a social music app that brings back the social satisfaction and nostalgia of mixtapes and mixed CDs. Users can gift and receive mixtapes linked to geolocations on demand or as a surprise and filter to revisit music memories, like sifting through a virtual shoebox in your closet. In the future, we have a vision of MemRemix growing to host community music stations to foster connection through music in our wider communities in addition to between individuals. The UI/UX is designed with fun and connection at its core and is a nod to the retro neon days of the original mixtapes. In short, MemRemix is where your music and memories mix.



*“Hero” shots of Home and Receive a Tape screens.*

## Tasks

### **Task 1: Open and Play a Mixtape (Simple)**

As users receive individual tapes, individual songs, they are compiled into a mixtape, a playlist, of songs that are organized according to the people who have gifted them. Each tape stores the individual message that accompanied it. This function has been included so that users can revisit their musical memories from years ago, giving the user a strong sense of nostalgia.

### **Task 2: Revisit Music Memories (Moderate)**

All tapes, individual songs, and the personalized messages that a user has sent to all their friends are stored in chronological order for the user to revisit at any time. This function has been included so that the users can store and revisit all the songs and memories that they associate with their friends.

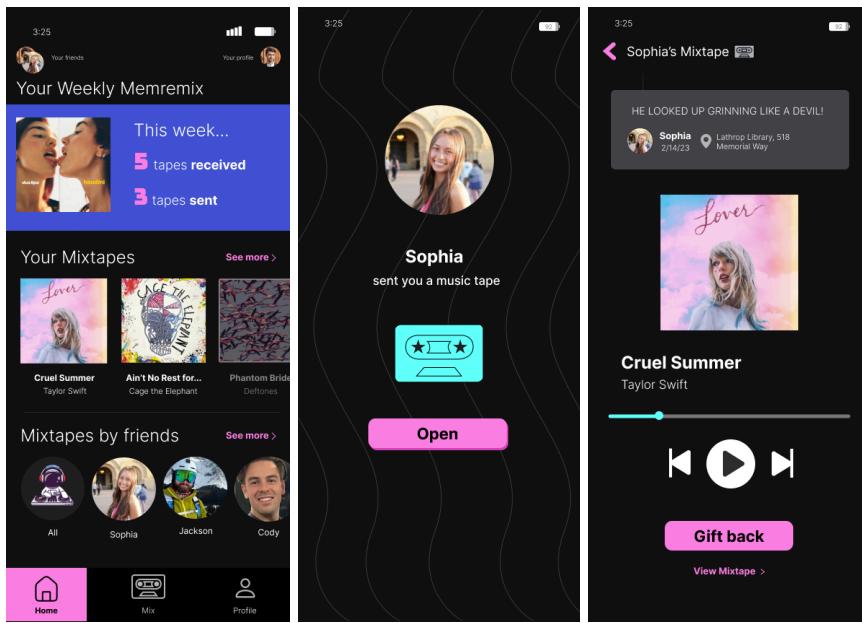
### **Task 3: Gift a Mixtape (Complex)**

Users can gift tapes, individual songs, to their friends. For each tape sent, the person gifting it can add a personalized message and pin it to a location. This function has been included so that music becomes a shared experience rather than an individual one.

# Task Flows

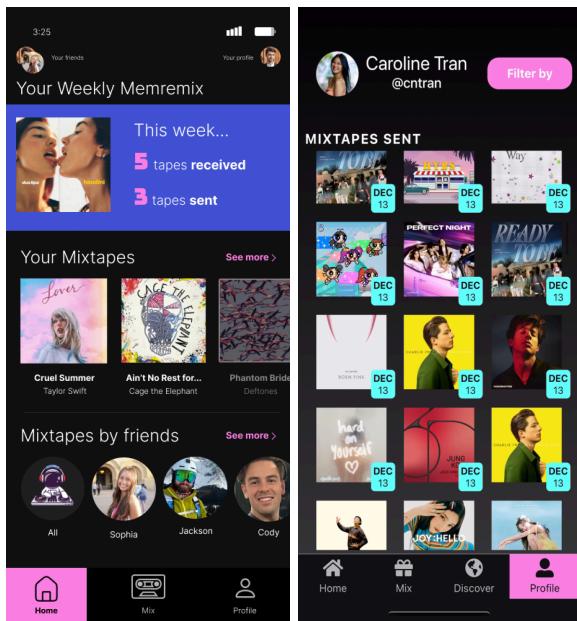
## Task 1: Open and Play a Mixtape (Simple)

Left to right: (1) Select a mixtape under “Your Mixtapes”. (2) Click “Open” to open the mixtape. (3) Click the play button to play the mixtape.



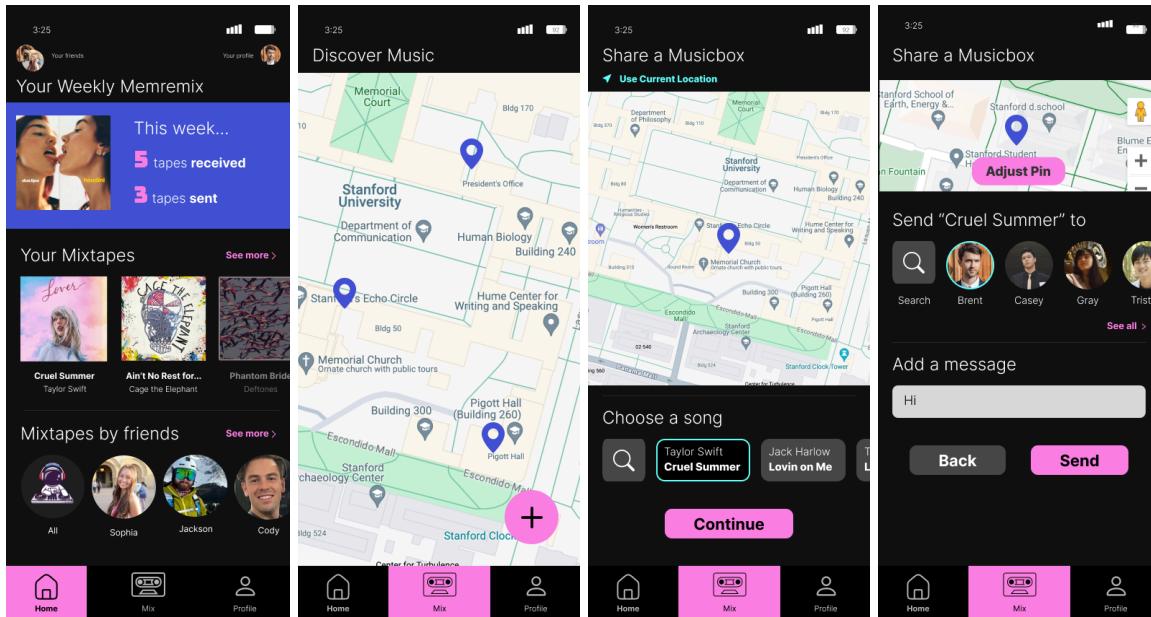
## Task 2: Revisit Music Memories (Moderate)

Left to right: (1) Click the “Profile” tab. (2) Browse your past mixtapes.



## Task 3: Gift a Mixtape (Complex)

Left to right: (1) Click the “Mix” tab. (2) Click the “+” button. (3) Select a location on the map, choose a song, and click “Continue”. (4) Select a recipient, type a message, and click “Send”.

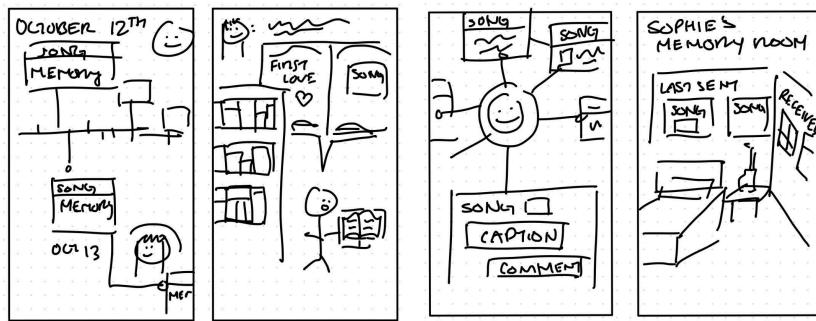


# Design Evolution

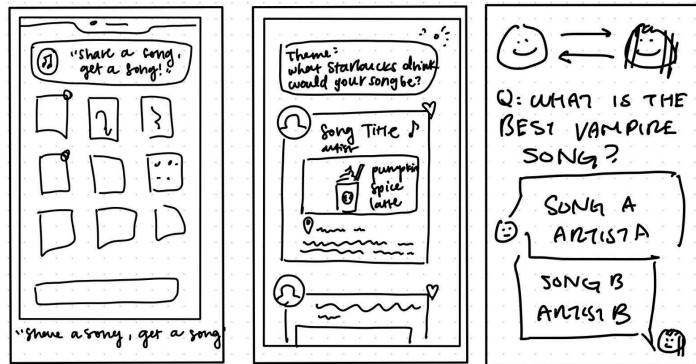
This section documents how the design for MemReprise became the design for MemRemix, going from initial concept sketches to low-fidelity paper prototype to medium-fidelity prototype, to various versions of the high-fidelity prototype.

## Initial Sketches

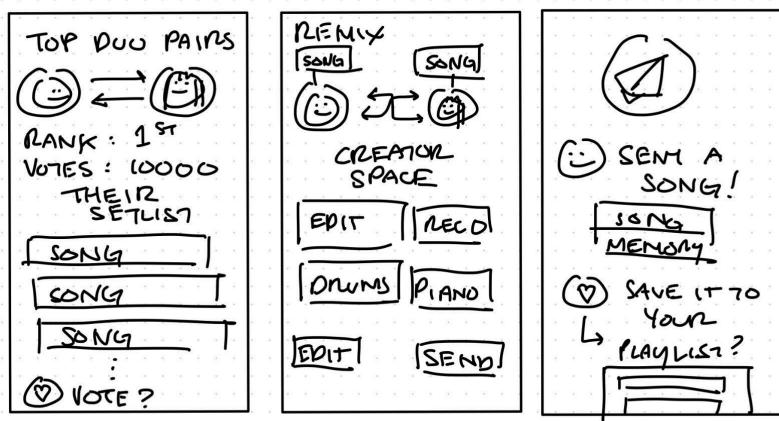
Below are the initial concept sketches for MemReprise.



Concept sketches for a “Memory Pages” feature, where users have some sort of central profile to document all the memory music posts.

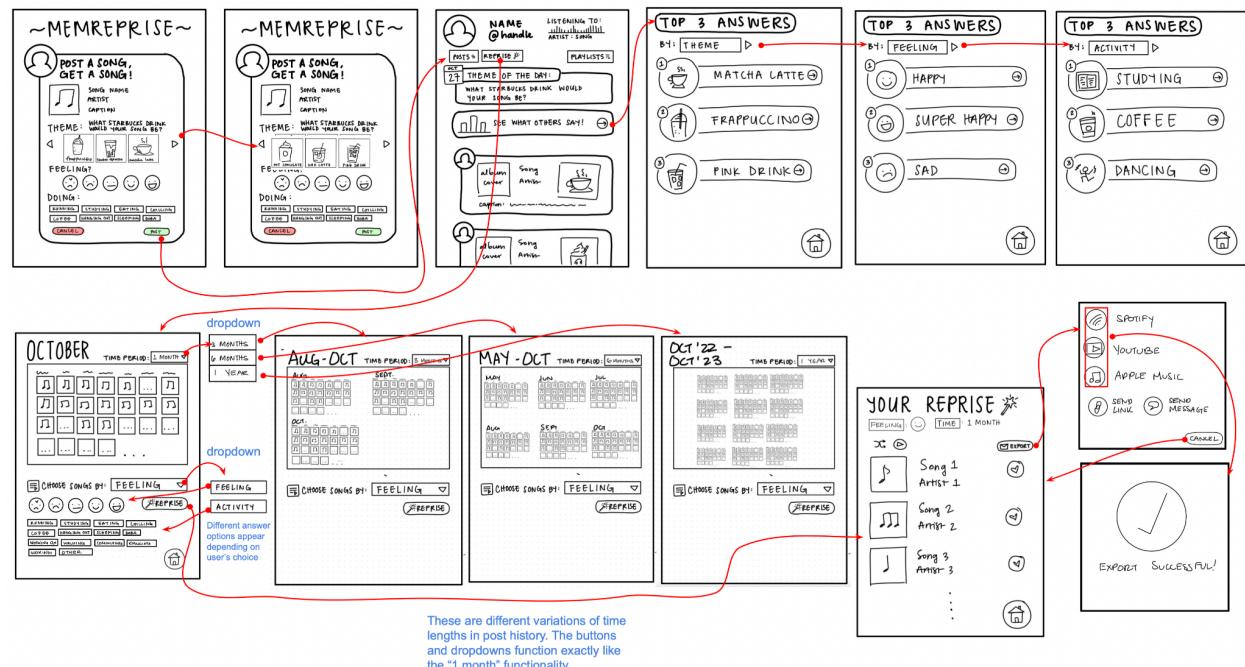


Concept sketches for a “Posting Prompts” feature, where users are prompted regularly to post songs and associate their music to interesting questions and themes.



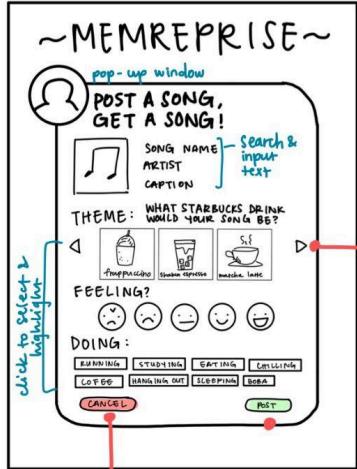
Concept sketches for a “Playlist Building” feature, where users are able to curate and create playlists from swapped and shared songs.

## Low-Fidelity Prototype

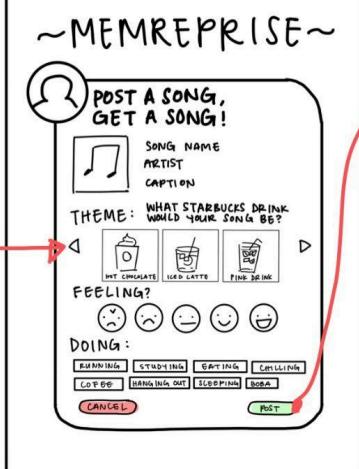


Birds eye view of the prototype screens. These screens were printed out onto paper to create the low-fidelity paper prototype.

Screen 1:



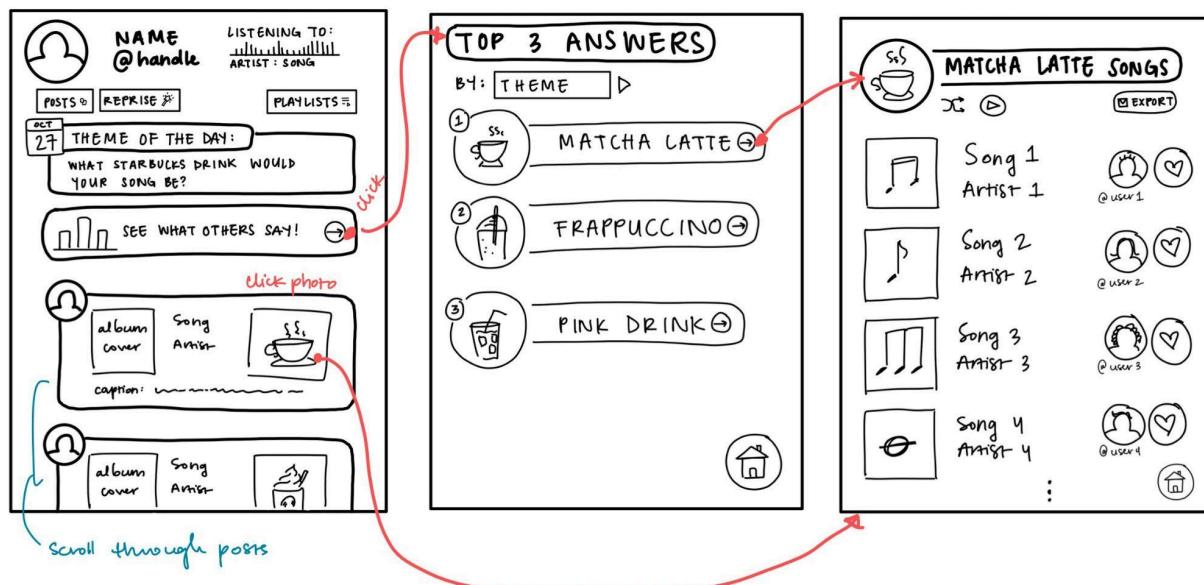
Screen 1:



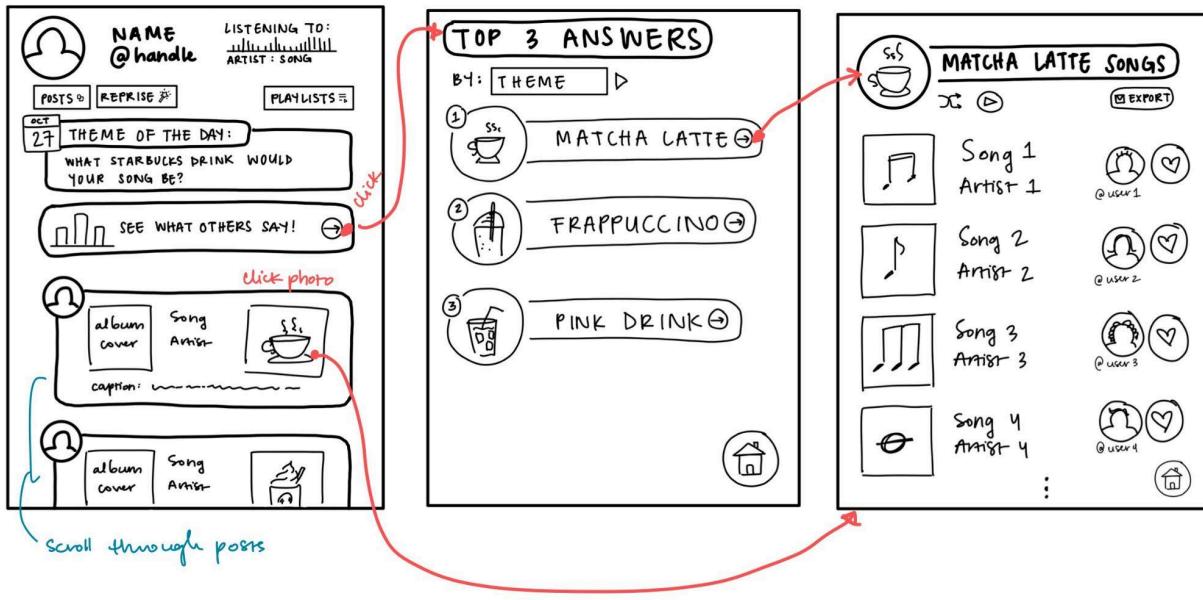
Screen 2 :



Lo-fi prototype for the simple task of sharing a song on MemReprise.



Lo-fi prototype for the moderate task of discovering music from other users who have similar music associations.



*Lo-fi prototype for the complex task of creating a personalized playlist from songs you recently shared.*

## Major Changes and Considerations

There were technically a lot of major changes in between the sketches and low-fidelity paper prototype, but much of these changes were just simply due to being able to actually flesh out the app and model screens instead of creating simple sketches that outline the general idea of the prototype.

Instead, here are the considerations that shaped the lo-fi prototype:

- Music is intrinsically linked to emotion and memory, and all three should be present while navigating through the prototype.
- Our ability to represent these associations is, of course, limited by technology.
- People want to share, but they don't always want to share their memories or experiences in words and often do not want to share them in a lot of depth.

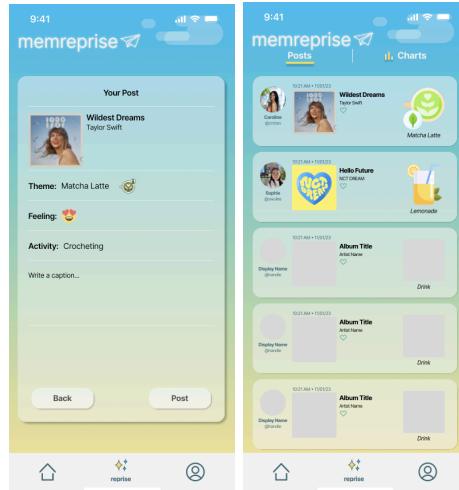
## Medium-Fidelity Prototype



*Med-fi prototype for the task of searching for a song on MemReprise.*



*Med-fi prototype for the task of personalizing a post.*



*Med-fi prototype for the task of finalizing a post.*

## **Major Changes**

The below changes are a result of the lo-fi paper prototype testing.

### **Lock Screen**

Introduction screen will have a lock, giving a user the opportunity to either post a song or do it later (in which app will close). This is done to encourage users to contribute to the platform and their community, rather than simply lurking.

### **3 Steps**

Users will now fill in their post in three sequential steps, so that users are not overwhelmed with all of the questions presented to them.

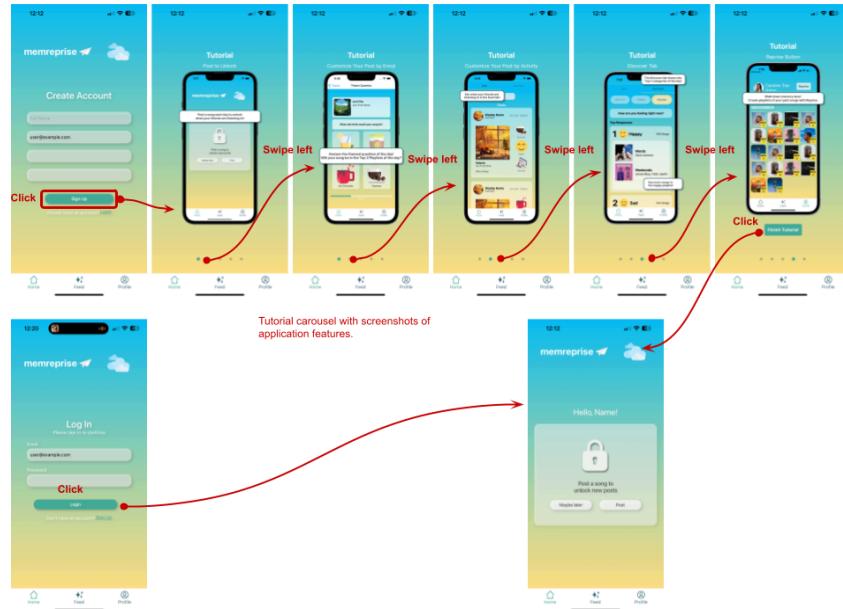
### **Navbar**

There will be a navbar at the bottom of the app to promote easy access to each screen. The navbar was accidentally omitted in the lo-fi version.

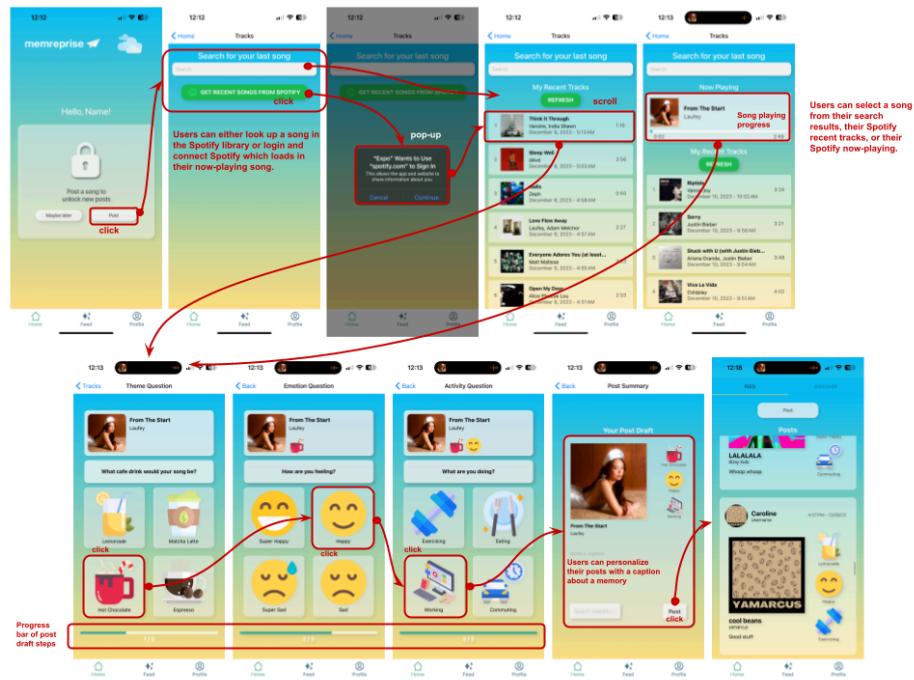
### **User Archives**

Users can see what their past songs they posted through their activity tab or calendar tab and filter posts through categories and time. This is so that users can have easy access to their journal-type reflection entries and track any changes in their behavior over time.

## High-Fidelity Prototype v1



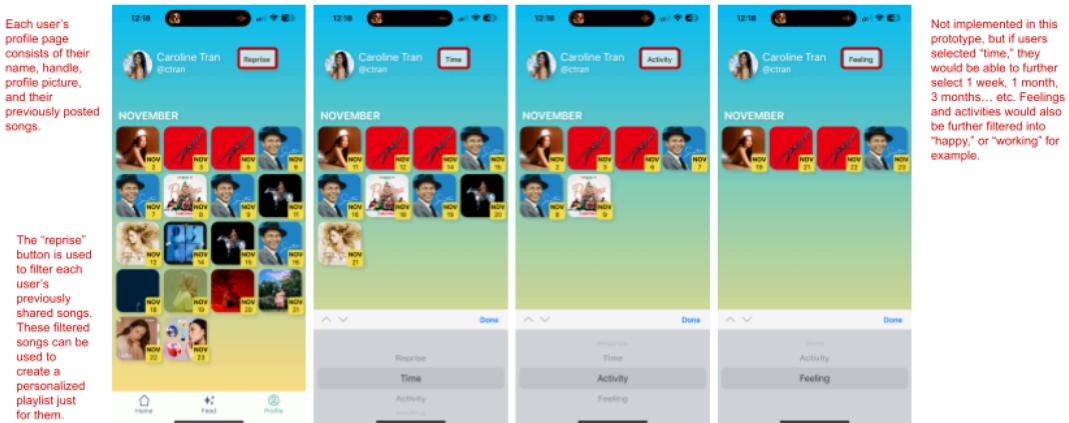
The screens for signing up for an account (and the tutorial) or logging in on the high-fidelity prototype (v1).



The high-fidelity prototype (v1) for the simple task of choosing a song, selecting themes, and posting a song.



*The high-fidelity prototype (v1) screens for discovering posts and playlists (sorted by theme) by other users (moderate).*



*The high-fidelity prototype (v1) for the complex task of using the reprise function to filter through your past posts on the profile page.*

## **Major Changes**

Major changes in this section were determined by heuristic analysis done on the entire app.

### **Post Overview**

- Because users may not want to share posts to everyone, we allow them to toggle visibility settings to the public, followers, and only me. It also provides a memory archive for each user by allowing for posts visible to only that user.
- Design was made more legible by increasing font size and padding.

### **“My Reprise” Pop-Up**

- Filtering by theme was removed because the theme category didn't have a clear meaning to users.
- Filtering options for activity and emotions were also expanded to contain all options that users had seen previously when selecting an activity or emotion.

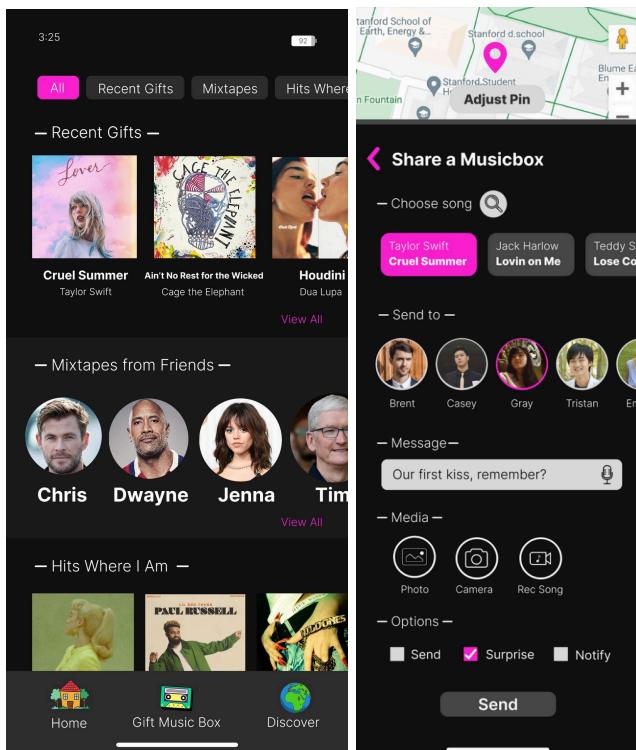
### **Calendar Activity**

- Calendar album image posts were changed into larger squares because they were too small for users to recognize previously.
- Dates for when each post was made were included to avoid confusion on the organization and ordering structure on this screen.

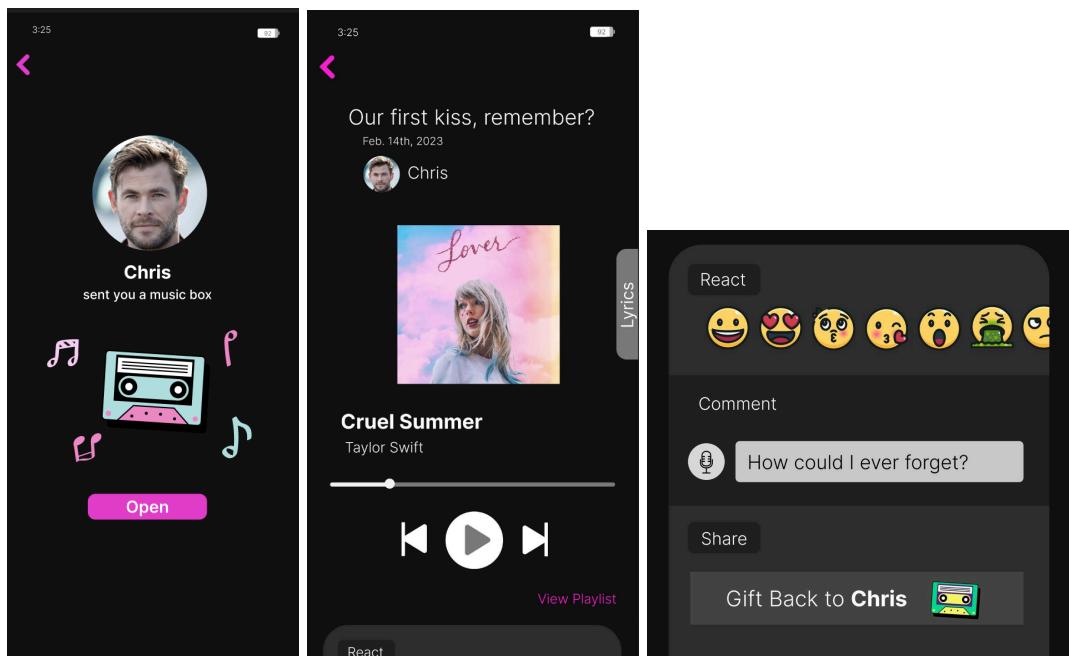
### **Login and Signup with Tutorials**

- Having a login and sign up flow makes more sense to new users and would make for a more immersive experience during demos.
- New users can get a better understanding of the app's functionality after signing up by being led through a tutorial, thus lessening the learning curve and resolving any confusion.

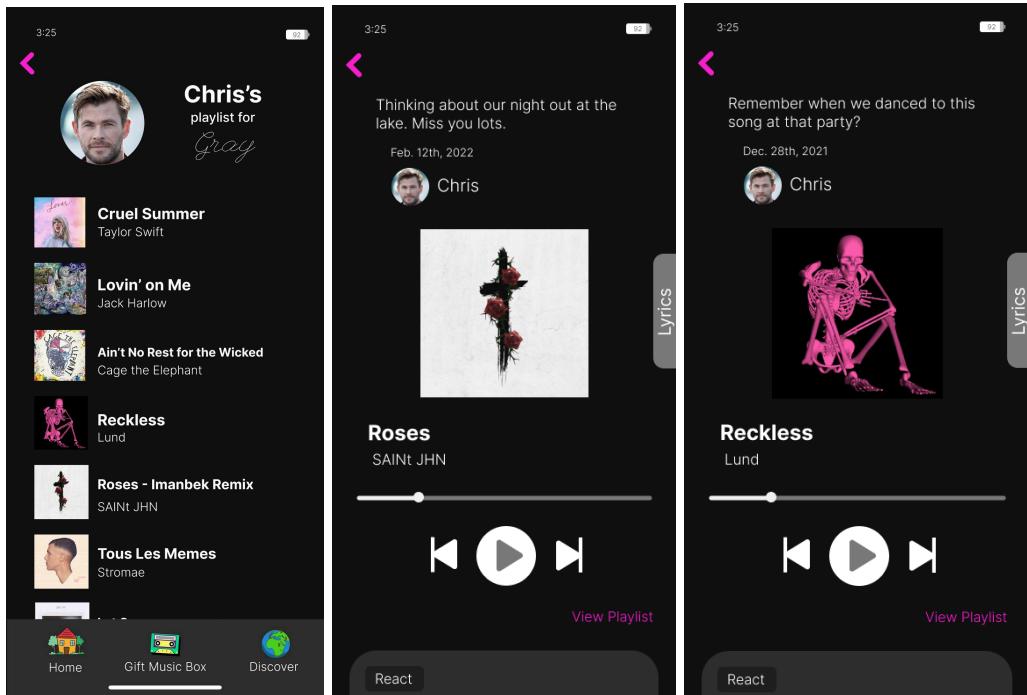
## High-Fidelity Prototype v2



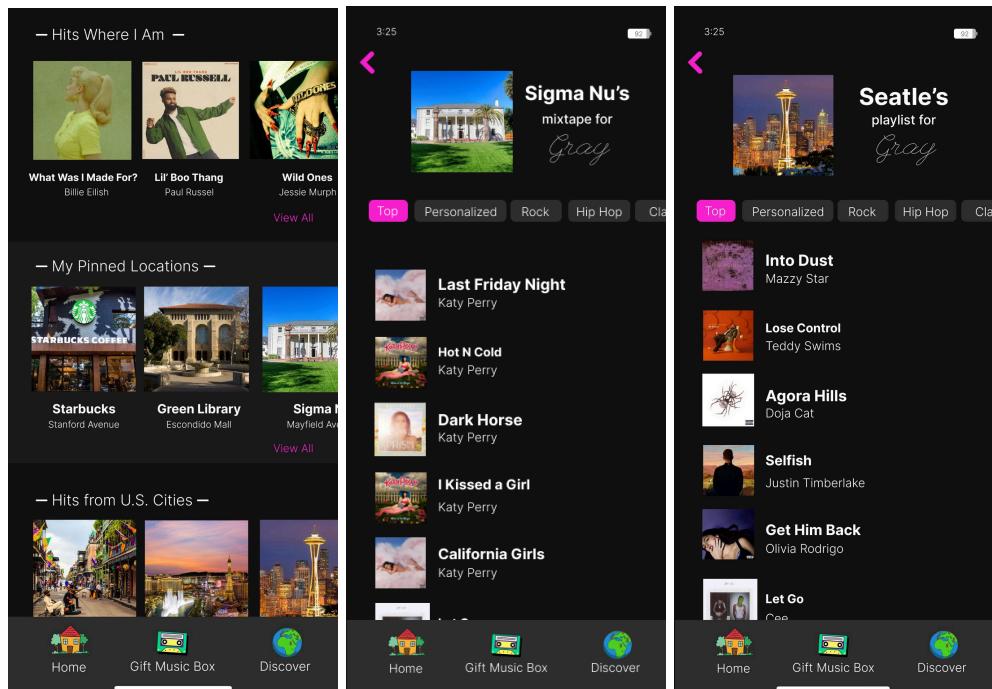
*Send songs as gifts to friends and families with a personalized touch (simple, part 1).*



*Receive songs as gifts from friends and families with a personalized touch and react to these gifts (simple, part 2).*



*Listen to mixtapes, a.k.a. playlists, of songs arranged by who sent them to you (moderate).*



*Discover music in unique ways by getting auto-generated playlists of music played near you, in cities around the world, and locations you pin (complex).*

## **Major Changes**

After the app's direction pivot, we did usability testing, which led to these major changes below.

### **Concept Adjustment**

- The MemReprise team decided to switch from a music journaling / diary app to more of a social app with geolocation features in order to better promote connection with the community.
- Theme questions were removed, as the app was now centered on sending songs to each other instead of journaling.
- Tasks were updated to match this new direction:
  - Share songs tied to locations with friends and family. This is because pre-defined prompts often felt awkward or too forced.
  - Discover songs and explore playlists through personal gifts and community locations. This is because we wanted to take advantage of the fact that music fosters personal relationships.
  - Focus on shared memories through music. This is because we wanted to foster social connection while maintaining nostalgia.

### **Profile Page**

- The profile page was removed for simplification because it felt unnecessary and pointless, as there was no need for the filtering functionality that it previously offered, given that the new concept is focused on a back-and-forth exchange.

### **Mix Tab**

- The mix tab was added so that users could easily send a musicbox to a friend. Additionally, we wanted to highlight this interaction, hence why it was made into a tab in the navigation bar.

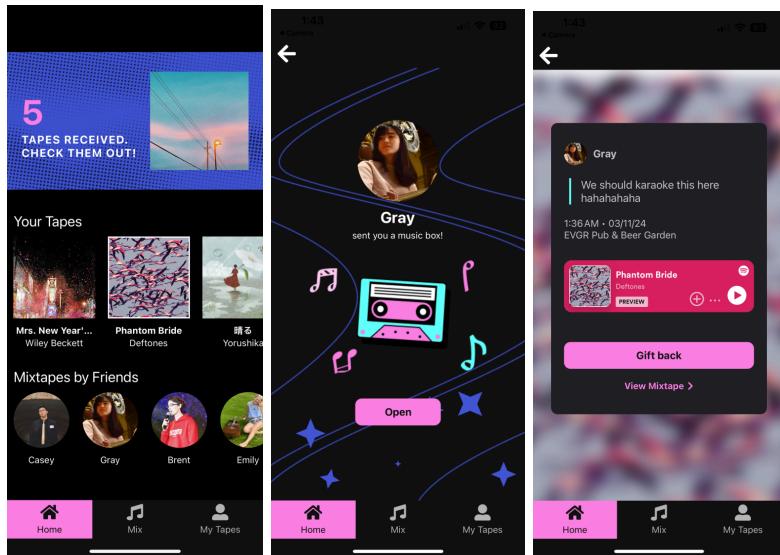
### **Home Feed Modified**

- Changed it from a post-style feed to a dashboard-type of interface in order to keep track of songs from friends and locations.

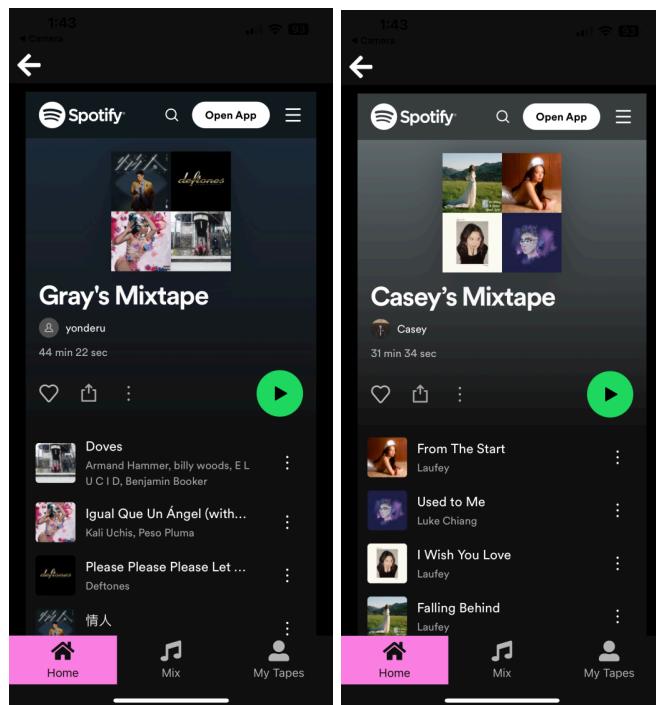
### **Aesthetics**

- Color scheme was modified to encourage fun and provide a sense of energy and connection with the high-energy saturated colors on a black background.

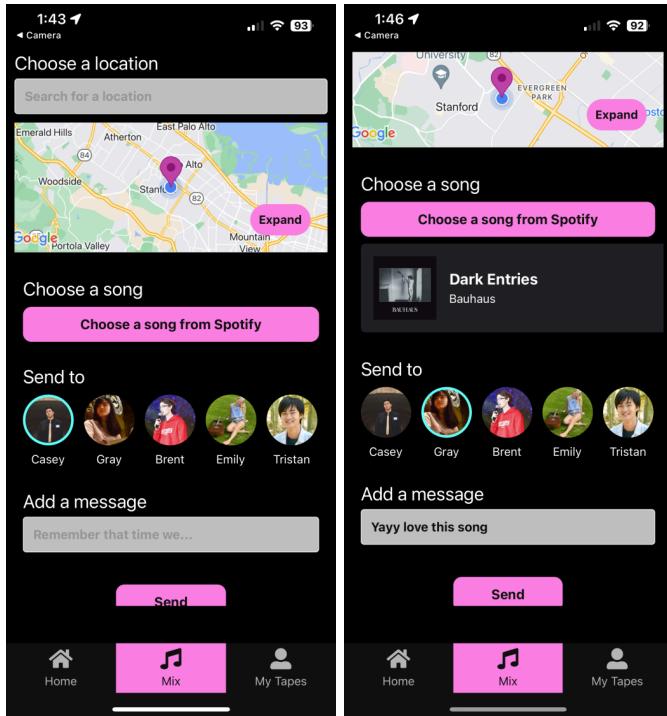
## High-Fidelity Prototype v3



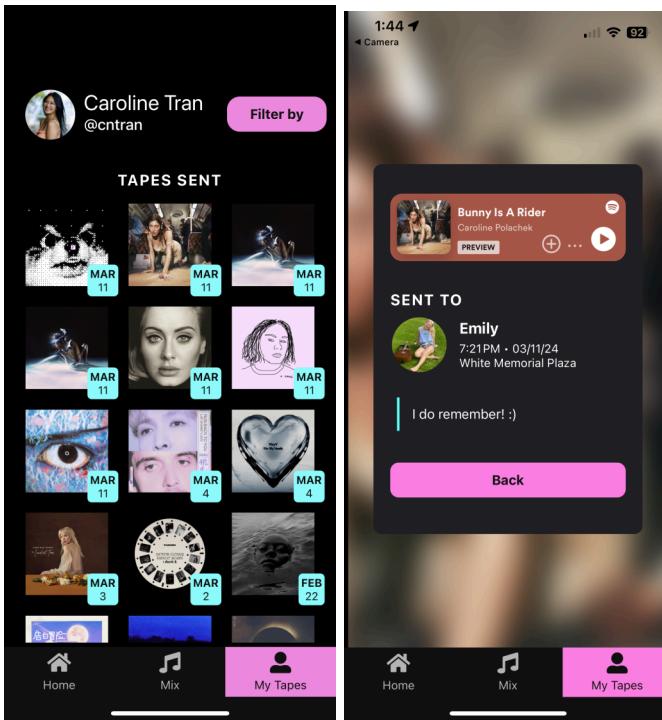
*High-fidelity (v3) screens for the simple task of opening a tape.*



*High-fidelity (v3) screens for viewing your friends' mixtapes, a collection of tapes that they've sent you.*



*High-fidelity (v3) screens for the complex task of sending a tape to a friend.*



*High-fidelity (v3) screens for the medium task of revisiting music memories that you've sent to others.*

## **Major Changes**

Major changes in this version were due to a reflection of the field usability study and additional usability testing.

### **Name Change**

- MemReprise was changed to MemRemix to better complement the app's new direction.
- Changed the word choice of musicbox to tape (equivalent to a post on other social media sites) and mixtape (collection of tapes) in order to standardize vocabulary and lean into the cassette tape theme.

### **Task Redirection and Simplification**

- Removed "My Pinned Locations" for reasonable development expectations and to focus on friends and community, as per value proposition.
- Removed/abandoned the idea of discovering tapes on a map to better redirect time to the task of sending tapes.

### **Home Screen**

- Introduced "Your Weekly MemRemix" hero to counter "no personal investment to actively engage with the app" and introduce some personalized statistics, based on Field Usability Study (Karl).
- A/B tested ( $n = 2$ ) access to friends versus user profile and found that users preferred a profile tab over a top menu.

### **Profile Page Reintroduced**

- Reintroduced filtering based on sent mixtapes based on Karl's and 1 bonus usability tester's want for personal analytics and records.
- Simplified filtering based on initial lab study confusion where all four participants had difficulty with understanding the reprise (filter) feature.
- Filtering simplified to last month, quarter, year, rather than bombarding the user with too many options for filtering.

### **Playing a Tape**

- Navigation header revised to match new app vocabulary of "Mixtape" rather than "Musicbox."
- Introduced clear design hierarchy in the Tape message so the friend reads first, then message text, time and date, and location. This made

the design overall easier on the eyes, compared to our previous iteration, where hierarchy was unclear. New message design also matches “comment” design conventions standard on other social apps.

- “React” functionality removed/reprioritized for development feasibility.
- “Gift back” emphasized to encourage app’s core functionality. Used primary pink action color to reiterate app design conventions.
- Spacing modified based on comments ( $n = 2$ ) from additional usability testing regarding complaints of it feeling too cramped.
- Implemented Spotify embed player so that users can actually have the ability to do something with their mixtapes and have a preview. Partially a response to Karl’s feedback on how he was unsure of how MemRemix would connect to Spotify.

### **Sharing a Tape**

- More robust implementation as opposed to a static one from v2 with few UI changes.
- Choosing a song was broken into different steps so as to not cognitively overwhelm the user.
- More padding and spacing was added to contents as per 1 bonus usability tester’s feedback on the mixtape screen feeling cramped.

### **Aesthetics**

- Focused more on images and style and added animation to evoke “coolness” and increase our “fun factor” per Field Usability Feedback on how the app needed more personality (Karl, Josh).

### **Tab Names**

- Simplified our navigation schema to the profile and 3 essential words/actions: “Home” to view feed, “Mix” to send a tape, and “Discover” to view tape map based on Field Usability Feedback on tab names not being intuitive (Nina, Shelly, Josh, Karl). We focused on clean, cool icons for design consistency.

# Final User Interface

## Functionality

MemRemix is a social music app where users can gift and receive tapes, revisit music memories between friends, and explore music from other friends in their community through customized mixtapes. Through these features, you can feel more connected not only with your friends, but with the larger community that you belong to. MemRemix connects to Spotify and Google Maps, allowing users to share songs at locations they specify and send these songs as tapes with personalized messages to other users.

## User Interface Design

The user interface design of MemRemix is left very clean and stylish, with various graphic elements and electric colors to match the energy and excitement of creating and sharing mixtapes with friends in the days before music streaming platforms.

Users can navigate through three tabs: home, mix, and profile. Home is a dashboard where you can see your personalized weekly summary of app usage, the tapes that you've received (and the songs and messages for each), and access mixtapes from friends that collect the tapes that each friend has sent to you. Mix allows you to send a tape to a friend by specifying the location, song, friend, and message. Google Maps and Spotify are fully integrated in this tab to allow for a logical progression of tasks and intuitive user interface. Profile is a collection of all the tapes that you have sent to your friends over time and has a filtering function that allows you to show tapes based on if they were sent within the last month, last quarter, and last year.

We prioritized simple taps for a majority of button-like interactions. Horizontal and vertical scrolls were used to keep designs clean whenever elements needed to be listed out.

## Unimplemented Features and Rationale

### Playing Complete Songs

**Exclusion Reason:** Licensing complexities and the financial burden of securing rights for full-length song playback made this feature impractical. Integration with services like Spotify was outside the initial project scope.

### **Storing Sent Songs in Playlists**

**Exclusion Reason:** The logistical challenges of hosting music content directly led to prioritizing playlist creation that links to songs on external streaming platforms.

### **Personalizing Tapes with Photos and Videos**

**Exclusion Reason:** Time constraints and prioritization of core functionalities delayed the development of a feature-rich interface for customizing mixtapes with multimedia.

### **Geolocation-Based Community Listening Stations**

**Exclusion Reason:** The complexity of integrating geo-location services and the technical challenges in accurately detecting and rendering nearby location markers made this feature challenging to implement for the initial release. The focus was shifted towards developing more readily achievable features to ensure a stable and engaging user experience at launch.

### **Wizard of Oz and Hard-Coded Techniques**

#### **Preset Friends List**

For the purpose of demonstrating the feature of sending a mixtape, the list of recipient friends is pre-defined. This hard-coded list simplifies the demonstration by avoiding the complexity of a dynamic friend system and ensures reliability during tests or presentations.

#### **Preset User Profile Screen**

User profile information, including the profile name and picture, is statically set for demonstration purposes. This approach avoids the need for real-time user data retrieval, simplifying the demonstration of profile functionalities.

## **Pre-Defined Received Mixtape Generation**

To simulate the experience of receiving mixtapes, the app generates playlists from a predefined set of songs. This method allows for a consistent demonstration of how users would interact with received mixtapes, without the need for real backend data processing or user interaction.

## **Most Valuable Evaluation Technique**

The most valuable evaluation technique for improving our prototype's usability over two quarters was user testing. This method stood out due to its direct feedback, observation of real user interactions, and ability to facilitate rapid, iterative improvements. Watching users navigate the prototype highlighted usability issues and validated design decisions from a diverse range of perspectives. This process ensured that enhancements were grounded in actual user experiences, significantly boosting the prototype's intuitiveness and overall user satisfaction. User testing's immediate and actionable insights were crucial for refining the app to better meet users' needs.

## **Implementation Tools**

### **React Native**

- Description: A popular framework for building native apps using React, a JavaScript library.
- Pros:
  - Cross-platform: Write code once, run on both iOS and Android.
  - Strong community and support.
  - Seamless integration with third-party plugins.
- Cons:
  - Performance can be slightly lower than native apps (such as Swift for iOS)
  - Debugging can sometimes be challenging and reliant on console logs.

### **Expo Go**

- Description: An open-source platform for making universal native apps for Android, iOS, and the web with JavaScript and React.
- Pros:
  - Simplifies the development process.

- No need for native development environment setup.
  - Instant updates and easy sharing of prototypes.
- Cons:
  - Limited to Expo's ecosystem; some native modules are not supported.
  - Larger app size (e.g. node modules folder for dependencies).

## **Figma**

- Description: A web-based UI/UX design application, known for its collaborative interface.
- Pros:
  - Real-time collaboration features.
  - Intuitive interface with a low learning curve.
  - Extensive plugin ecosystem (e.g. for icons).
- Cons:
  - Primarily focuses on front-end design, lacking integrated tools for backend development or full-stack prototyping.
  - Limited offline capabilities.

## **Xcode**

- Description: Apple's integrated development environment (IDE) for macOS, used to develop software for iOS.
- Pros:
  - Comprehensive toolset for developing Apple applications.
  - Integrated with Apple's ecosystem, ensuring smooth deployment.
  - Advanced debugging and simulation tools.
- Cons:
  - Only available on macOS.
  - Can be resource-intensive.

## **Android Studio**

- Description: The official IDE for Android development, offering tools for building apps on every type of Android device.
- Pros:
  - Tailored for Android development with robust tools.
  - Emulator for testing apps on various Android versions and screen sizes.
  - Integrated with Google services.
- Cons:

- Resource-intensive and can be slow on less powerful machines.
- Steeper learning curve for beginners.

## **GitHub**

- Description: A web-based version-control and collaboration platform for software developers.
- Pros:
  - Excellent for team collaboration and version control.
  - Integrates with many development tools and services.
  - Large community and extensive documentation.
- Cons:
  - Can be complex for beginners.
  - Managing merge conflicts can be challenging and lead to bugs.

## **VSCode**

- Description: A lightweight but powerful source code editor which runs on your desktop and is available for Windows, macOS and Linux.
- Pros:
  - Highly customizable with extensions.
  - Integrated Git control and debugging.
  - Large extension marketplace.
- Cons:
  - High memory usage with multiple extensions.

## **Prettier Extension**

- Description: A code formatter that enforces a consistent style by parsing code and re-printing it with its own rules.
- Pros:
  - Ensures consistent code formatting.
  - Integrates well with VSCode and other IDEs.
  - Supports many languages and frameworks.
- Cons:
  - Opinionated formatting may not suit all developers.

## **Spotify Developer API**

- Description: Provides access to Spotify's music catalog and user data, allowing developers to create apps that interact with the Spotify platform.
- Pros:

- Access to a vast music library and user data.
  - Well-documented with good support.
  - Enables rich music-related functionalities in apps.
- Cons:
  - Requires adherence to Spotify's terms and usage and rate limits.
  - Changes in API can require updates in the app.
  - Requires setting up client ID, client secret, and redirect URI for expo app.

## **Supabase**

- Description: An open-source Firebase alternative providing all the backend services you need to build a product.
- Pros:
  - Easy to use and set up.
  - Provides a suite of tools including database, authentication, and storage.
  - Real-time capabilities.
- Cons:
  - Being relatively new, it may lack some advanced features.
  - Community and support are growing but not as extensive as more established platforms.

## **Aptabase**

- Description: A real-time open-source alternative to Google Firebase Analytics, designed for mobile and desktop applications. It offers developers a seamless way to implement analytics into their apps.
- Pros:
  - Versatility: Supports a broad array of platforms, including Native iOS, Android, Flutter, Electron, and more, making it a flexible choice for developers.
  - Real-Time Analytics: Offers real-time data updates, giving developers immediate insights into app usage and user interactions.
- Cons:
  - Limited User-Level Analytics: Due to its commitment to anonymity, it's not possible to perform analytics at the user level, such as Monthly Active Users or User Retention. This may limit the depth of insights available to developers.

- Newness in the Market: Being relatively new compared to established giants like Google Firebase, it may have a smaller community and less third-party resources available.

## **Places API**

- Description: A service by Google that allows developers to access detailed information about millions of places across the globe. It provides data such as place names, locations, ratings, reviews, and photos.
- Pros:
  - Extensive Database: Access to a vast amount of data on places worldwide.
  - Highly Reliable: Provides accurate and up-to-date information.
  - Customization: Allows for detailed queries to find specific types of locations.
- Cons:
  - Cost: Can be expensive at scale due to API call charges.
  - Usage Limits: Subject to strict usage quotas and limitations.

## **Google Maps Provider for Maps React Component**

- Description: A component that integrates Google Maps into React applications, enabling developers to display custom maps with various features like markers, overlays, and events directly in their apps.
- Pros:
  - Integration: Seamless integration with Google Maps, offering a rich set of mapping features.
  - Customizable: Highly customizable, allowing developers to tailor the map's appearance and functionality to their needs.
  - User Experience: Enhances the app's UX by providing interactive maps and location services.
- Cons:
  - Google Maps API Key: Requires a Google Maps API key, which comes with usage limits and potential costs.
  - Performance: Loading and rendering maps can impact app performance, particularly on lower-end devices.
  - Dependency: Relies on Google's services, meaning any changes to their API or pricing can directly affect the app.

## **High-Fidelity Prototype README**

Our hi-fi prototype README is linked [here](#).

# Making It Real

## Our Team



**Casey N.**

Developer



**Brent J.**

Designer  
Developer  
PM



**Emily R.**

Designer  
Developer  
PM



**Gray W.**

Designer  
Developer



**Tristan W.**

Designer  
Developer

*Team names and roles.*

Casey, one of our lead developers implemented our back-end infrastructure, including our two functional APIs (Google Maps and Spotify) and functional user database. Casey also collaborated on front-end design. He tenaciously crossed technical boundaries and proved that he is the developer to build a robust system.

Brent, Emily, and Gray collaborated on all designs, bouncing ideas and iterations off of each other to pull off a successful major design pivot in a matter of weeks both in terms of User Interface and User Experience. Emily joined the team with PM experience at Pandora / SiriusXM, a music streaming company, and user research on collaborative music experiences, which she leveraged in the design pivot. Gray applied her versatile skill set to develop front-end components for the designs.

Tristan kept our brand polished and up to date as our website creator and manager. He also joined Gray to code front-end components.

Together, the MemRemix team brings a variety of life experiences and technical skills and a love for music to the table to be the right team to build the app.

## **Business Model, Unit Economics, Customer and Market Opportunity**

It has been proven that customers are willing to pay a subscription for digital music services. With both Apple Music and Spotify charging \$10.99 / mo for an individual subscription. In the days of mixtapes and mixed CDs, creators would invest between a few cents to a few dollars per tape. Combining this industry precedent and building on our initial implementation integrated with Spotify, our initial business model is to be an “add-on” subscription for these major streaming services. For an additional \$0.99/mo, customers can access MemRemix in addition to their favorite streaming service. We reasonably expect customers would not want to shift to an entirely new music app, having already established a list of Saved songs, and somehow want to facilitate interaction with the music setup they already use and know.

Spotify’s market cap is \$50.55B as of March 15, 2024, according to YCharts. As \$0.99/mo is about 9% of Spotify’s monthly subscription, we see a market opportunity of \$4.55B for our initial business plan. While Spotify has other revenue streams such as advertisers and industry partnerships, we also expect to add brand sponsorships to our revenue stream upon the release of our community listening stations.

We see our initial target customer as high school and college students, who have been shown to have the most time to consume and craft music. In the future, we have confidence to expand to wide age ranges, given the universality of sharing music.

## **Long-Term Impact**

MemRemix will shake up the music industry. Music listeners were brought into the streaming era and were rightfully enraptured by the endless access to listen to whatever they want whenever they want, leaving behind the personal and social elements of music in the process, i.e. owning the music in your library, gifting songs and tapes to friends, crafting your own playlists rather than relying on algorithms. But more than a decade since Spotify was launched in 2008, it’s time for something new in the music industry, which often operates on about 15 year cycles.

MemRemix is that “something new”, leveraging the technical accolades of streaming while re-introducing the personal and social satisfaction of gifted music, music memories, and community music.

## Summary

Music is inherently social. For all of us, it is embedded with meaning and memories. While offering access to diverse music, music streaming platforms today lack engaging social features, and often sacrifice intentionality for expediency. MemRemix's key innovation is combining the sentimentality of the mixtape with the networking power of the social media app. We provide a unique and accessible platform where users can gift, receive, and reminisce on songs in real time and real space. Put simply, streaming killed the mixtape, and MemRemix aims to bring it back.